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# ROOM with a VIEW

A DESIGNER TRANSFORMS HER  
OUTDATED KITCHEN INTO A BRIGHT  
AND SPACIOUS COUNTRY CLASSIC

WRITTEN BY LESLIE PLUMMER CLAGETT

PHOTOGRAPHED BY AIMEE HERRING

DESIGNED AND STYLED BY INGRID LEESS



**OPPOSITE:** Removing a hallway and the wall that once stood between the kitchen and dining room gave homeowner and designer Ingrid Leess the spacious, open kitchen she had always wanted.

**ABOVE:** The sink was kept in the same spot in the new kitchen. Rather than polished chrome, the designer prefers a satin finish for the faucet; its softness makes it recede visually.

**A**s head of her own eponymous design firm, Ingrid Leess is a whiz at pulling together creative and welcoming environments for her clients. When the time was right for redoing her own kitchen, she was well prepared, having researched the project thoroughly. “Remember the scene from the movie *A Beautiful Mind*, where the office walls are covered with paper and notes? For years, that’s how my kitchen looked, with floor plans, tear sheets and product swatches pinned up everywhere,” she says.

Ingrid knew when she purchased the 1940s-era farmhouse in the Connecticut countryside that the small, dark kitchen would eventually need redoing. And when the opportunity to

focus on the job finally presented itself, the stakes had been raised; her two daughters had become accomplished cooks, one of them even working at the Food Network.

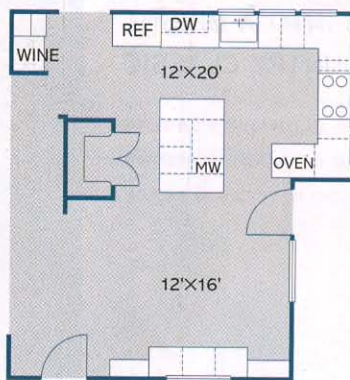
Gaining space for the three women to work together and increasing the light level in the kitchen were Ingrid’s priorities. Taking out the wall that separated the dining room from the adjacent kitchen addressed the first concern, but conversely created a larger space to brighten. Wanting to enhance the homey nature of the house’s architecture, the designer opted to install banks of windows on the kitchen’s three exterior walls to channel as much daylight as possible into the room.

This dovetailed with another design goal: to



control the character of the newly opened floor plan. “I didn’t want people sitting at the dining table looking into a space that was obviously a kitchen,” says Ingrid. Trading out wall cabinets for windows achieves this objective—but what about the storage capacity that was sacrificed? A new pantry, carved from a former hallway, proved the ideal solution. Fitted with an adjustable organizer system, it supplements the storage offered by the drawers in the island and new crisp, white perimeter base cabinets. The arrangement happens to be a boon to cooks who are petite in stature, too, as there’s no stretching to reach the contents of a wall-hung cupboard. New painted ceiling planks also increase the character quotient.

Although the appliances were replaced, they remained, for the most part, in or close to their original locations. A cousin in Sweden—yet another foodie in



**ABOVE:** Because installing the wall oven in a conventional way would require sacrificing some window area, it was placed under the counter.

**LEFT:** To add a sense of space and light, a wall was removed between the dining area and kitchen, and new windows were installed on three perimeter walls, opening both spaces to views.


the family—convinced Ingrid to install an induction cooktop. “I love it!” says the designer, citing its rapid heating rate and wipe-clean surface.

The finishes used in the kitchen were selected to bolster the lightness of the space. Topping the white-painted cabinets are slabs of a quartz-based composite; impervious to the stains that a busy household can generate, it doesn’t require periodic sealing. The milky-white counters have an organic pattern that’s similar to limestone—a material more suited to this rural setting than polished granite.

The dining area continues the casual mood of the kitchen. A new window seat includes drawers that house linens right where they will be used. Surrounded by big windows and French doors, guests now enjoy the view of the garden outside as much as the revitalized kitchen within.

**BELOW:** Windows with glazing that minimizes fabric-fading UV rays and maximizes thermal benefits wrap the dining area, making it cozy and comfortable year-round.





**"I DIDN'T WANT PEOPLE  
SITTING AT THE DINING TABLE  
LOOKING INTO A SPACE  
THAT WAS OBVIOUSLY A KITCHEN."**

A whisper of color in the otherwise white kitchen, the glass tile backsplash complements the homeowner's collection of antique bottles and vases.



## DESIGN DETAILS



**HEATING UP** Hidden beneath the island countertop, the microwave oven and a warming drawer are just steps away from the stove and wall oven.



**EASY ACCESS** Having an adjustable storage system in the pantry freed the designer/homeowner from committing to fixed shelving.



**SECRET CHAMBER** A drawer-within-a-drawer is concealed by a single front panel, preserving the uniform appearance of the cabinets while delivering flexible storage.



**CHILLING OUT** A combination beverage cooler and wine chiller stands just outside the kitchen, where it serves thirsty guests while keeping them out of the way of busy cooks. ♦



Ingredients are centralized in the kitchen, with the refrigerator and the pantry (behind the double doors on the left) within steps of each other.





Plummer. **Faucet**, Herbeau. **Refrigerator and wine refrigerator**, Sub-Zero. **Range and microwave**, Wolf. **Dishwasher**, Bosch. **Cabinet hinges**, Tim Coldren, Monroe Coldren & Son, through Timeless Kitchen Design. **Cabinet catches**, Horton Brasses.

## ROOM WITH A VIEW Pages 78-83

**Designer**, Ingrid Leess, Leess Design. **Cabinets**, Masterpiece; **island**, Marsett; and **perimeter**, Hadley, all Merillat. **Dishwasher, refrigerator, cooktop and vent hood**, Gaggenau. **Oven, microwave and warming drawer**, Wolf. **Wine refrigerator**, Sub-Zero. **Windows and exterior doors**, Hurd Window & Doors. **Backsplash tile**, Glass Blox in Moonbeam, Crossville. **Cabinet hardware**, Emma in Venetian Bronze, Atlas Homewares. **Countertops**, Organic White, CaesarStone. **Faucet, soap dispenser and spray**, Oldare in Brushed Nickel; **sink**, Avado; all Elkay. **Ceiling and wall planks**, Armstrong. **Ceiling speakers**, Nutone.

**Pantry shelving**, Elfa, The Container Store. **Radiators**, Runtal. **Wood floors**, Marks Floor Service. **Wall paint**, Super White, and **Pantry door paint**, Silver Song, both Benjamin Moore. **Table**, Delft Table, Lillian August. **Lampshades and curtain rods**, Leess Design.

## FRESH START Pages 84-87

**Designer**, Ingrid Leess, Leess Design. **Wall tile**, Savoy in White; **niche and floor tile**, Stone Mosaic in Unicorn; both Crossville. **Showerhead**, Fairfax; **sink**, Water Cover Lavatory; **faucet**, Antique Wall Mount Lavatory Faucet; **toilet**, Rialto; and **tub**, Bellwether; all Kohler. **Countertop**, Organic White, CaesarStone. **Window**, Hurd Windows & Doors. **Light fixture** (above sink), Basisk, Ikea. **Wall and ceiling planks**, Armstrong. **Towel bar and toilet paper holder**, Emma in Brushed Nickel, Atlas Homewares. **Medicine cabinets and recessed ceiling fan/light**, Broan. **Heated towel rack**, Radia in White, Runtal.

## SLEEK RETREAT Pages 88-91

**Designer**, Steven Rasnick, Steven Rasnick Interior Design. **Architect**, Craig Cox, Cox Architecture & Design. **Tile** (on walls, shower, tub, backsplashes and baseboards), Plaza Carrara; and **floor tile**, Bluestone Porcelain; both from Renaissance Tile & Bath. **Sink faucets, thermostatic mixers and handshower** (in tub), Vola Collection by Arne Jacobson, Hastings Tile & Bath. **Showerhead**, Axor Citterio, Hansgrohe. **Fireplace**, Fire Ribbon Direct Vent Vu Thru, Spark Modern Fires. **Vanity countertops**, Honed Italian Carrara Marble, Pinnacle Marble & Granite. **Vanity lighting**, Roderick Bath Bar, Robert Abbey. **Window seat fabric**, Tangent by Michael Weiss, Kravet. **Linens**, Gotham Towel Collection, Waterworks. **Shower glass partition**, Custom Glass Works of Fort Mill. **Accessory hooks**, Home Collection, Smedbo. **Window treatments**, Smith + Noble. **Vase** (on tub), Crate & Barrel. **Bath products**, Korres Natural Products.

## SOURCES

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